

himself told Napoleon afterwards that he really liked the King. We have a charming scene when the stiff and stupid royal favorite, Count Blacas, announced to the other Ministers that he intended to question Soult at the Council - table, and if the answers were unsatisfactory he had Soult's "dismissal" in his pocket; the dismissal being a pistol with which the old *emigre* meant to shoot the Marshal. When Soult appeared the other Ministers found that they had important business to transact in their respective offices and withdrew, leaving Blacas alone with his prey. Soult, however, forestalled the Count by going straight to the King, and informing Louis that the attacks made on him rendered it impossible for him to serve usefully, and he was relieved by Clarke, who had long held the post under Napoleon. This, however, was on the 11th of March> when it mattered little who was Minister. Soult joined Napoleon unwillingly, and after some bargaining, but was given Berthier's old post of Chief of the Staff of the army under Napoleon. His performance of this duty has been much criticised, but, as has been stated before,¹ most of these attacks depend on an erroneous belief in the excellence of the staff in Berthier's time; it must suffice here to say that any failure in this department during the Waterloo campaign may easily be matched in previous wars. Certainly no better choice could have been made for an anny about to meet the English. After Waterloo Soult was put in command of the army at Laon, relieving Jerome, who was supposed to have brought it from the field. When he heard of Napoleon's abdication he obtained permission to return to Paris, and gave the command over at Soissons to Grouchy. He has been attacked for this, but his duty was not quite clear. The main army really was then Grouchy's corps, and Soult could not have been expected to serve under Grouchy or even Davoust. In the consultations at Paris he advised non-resistance, but all those who did so somehow fell under the special displeasure of the Bourbons, and Soult was exiled and retired to Berg. In 1819 he returned, and after 1830, under the Monarchy of July, he held many high offices. He

¹ See p. 154 of this volume.